

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: MAY 10 ROUNDUP: PRESS ITEMS OF ARMS CONTROL
INTEREST

LONDON FOR AMB/EX, SOFIA FOR AMBASSADOR

1. MICHAEL GETLER OF WASHINGTON POST REPORTED FROM BONN
THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT SAID IN TELEVISION INTERVIEW THAT
BREZHNEV, DURING HIS VISIT TO WEST GERMANY LAST WEEK, INDI-
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CATED WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE WITH WEST OVER WEAPONS IN
SO-CALLED "GRAY AREA" OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS. SCHMIDT GAVE
MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES AS "AN EXAMPLE" OF SUCH WEAPONS,
GETLER SAID. "SCHMIDT'S REMARKS SEEMED TO INDICATE FOR
FIRST TIME THAT SOVIETS WOULD BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE OVER
SUCH WEAPONS BUT OTHER HIGH-LEVEL SOURCES HERE SAID THEY
WERE 'DUBIOUS' ABOUT HOW MUCH BREZHNEV'S REPORTED WILLING-

NESS TO TALK REALLY MEANS." GRAY-AREA WEAPONS (THOSE OUTSIDE SALT AND MBFR), GETLER SAID, HAVE TAKEN ON "CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE IN PAST YEAR BECAUSE THEY COULD INCLUDE NOT ONLY SS-20 BUT ALSO, DEPENDING UPON WHOSE VIEW IS ACCEPTED, NEW SOVIET BACKFIRE BOMBER AND NEW U.S.-DEVELOPED NEUTRON WEAPON. THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS STAND IN WAY OF FURTHER EFFORTS TO CONTROL ATOMIC ARMAMENTS." SCHMIDT REPORTED THAT SOVIETS EXPRESSED "READINESS TO NEGOTIATE OVER WEAPONS IN GRAY ZONE" AS "STEP FORWARD," BUT PRIVATE SCHMIDT-BREZHNEV TALKS "PAINTED SOMEWHAT LESS ENTHUSIASTIC PICTURE. IN THEIR DESCRIPTION, WEST GERMANS SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE GOOD IDEA TO DISCUSS THESE GRAY AREA WEAPONS AND BREZHNEV GAVE ONLY SIMPLE AGREEMENT BUT DID NOT ELABORATE OR SAY ANYTHING ABOUT FORUM IN WHICH THESE DISCUSSIONS MIGHT TAKE PLACE. 'FACT THAT HE DIDN'T OBJECT IS OF INTEREST,' ONE HIGH-LEVEL SOURCE SAID, 'BUT IT IS STILL VERY IMPRECISE AND WHAT IT MAY MEAN FOR FUTURE WE DON'T KNOW.'"

2. BERNARD WEINRAUB OF NEW YORK TIMES SAID SECRETARY VANCE, AT PRIVATE MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, OFFERED INFORMAL COMPROMISE YESTERDAY ON ADMINISTRATION'S PLAN TO SELL ADVANCED MILITARY JETS IN PACKAGE TO SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, AND ISRAEL. WEINRAUB SAID VANCE PROPOSED TO SELL ISRAEL 20 ADDITIONAL F-15 FIGHTERS, TO BE DELIVERED IN 1983 AND 1984, WHICH WOULD GIVE ISRAEL UNCLASSIFIED

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60 OF THESE HIGH-PERFORMANCE PLANES, SAME NUMBER THAT U.S. PROPOSES TO SELL TO SAUDI ARABIA BY 1984. OTHER THEME DOMINATING ADMINISTRATION'S COMPROMISE, WEINRAUB REPORTED, IS ITS "WILLINGNESS TO GIVE WRITTEN ASSURANCES THAT SAUDI F-15'S WILL NOT BE EQUIPPED WITH AIR-TO-SURFACE WEAPONS AND WILL NOT BE BASED AT SITES CLOSE TO ISRAEL."

3. NEW YORK TIMES PUBLISHED REUTER DISPATCH FROM GENEVA REPORTING THAT U.S. AND USSR IN JOINT REPORT TO CCD, SAID THEY HAD AGREED ON MUCH OF SCOPE OF PROPOSED BAN ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS, BUT WERE STILL DIVIDED ABOUT HOW TO GUARD AGAINST CHEATING. JOINT REPORT SAID TWO COUNTRIES WERE CONTINUING INTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS ON ACCORD AND WOULD TRY TO COMPLETE TALKS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SOVIET DELEGATE VIKTOR LIKHACHEV, PRESENTING REPORT TO CCD, SAID COMPLEX ISSUES WERE INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING "AN ADEQUATELY VERIFIABLE DISARMAMENT MEASURE WHICH IS DESIGNED TO ELIMINATE AN ENTIRE CLASS OF WEAPONS FROM ARSENALS OF STATES AND WHICH ALSO AFFECTS ONE OF MAJOR INDUSTRIES IN MANY COUNTRIES."

4. EMMA ROTHSCHILD, IN GUEST COLUMN IN NEW YORK TIMES,

SUGGESTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER GO BEFORE SSOD AT U.N.
THIS MONTH AND ANNOUNCE "SIX-MONTH FREEZE ON ANY NEW
COMMITMENT TO SELL ARMS, AND ON TRANSFER OF MILITARY TECH-
NOLOGY." ROTHSCHILD SAID PRESIDENT "SHOULD DECLARE THAT
U.S. WILL JOIN REGIONAL CONFERENCES TO REDUCE ARMS SALES,
INCLUDING CONFERENCE FOR NATO REGION." VANCE

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